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ABSTRACT

Traditional teaching of English language arts is based on a receptive-accrual view of learning, which places the learner in a passive rather than an active role in the teaching-learning process. This approach conveys to the learner the view that the subject matter is fragmented and that teachers prepare discrete, disconnected lessons. L.M. Anderson's cognitive-mediational conception of learning and learners, on the other hand, is supportive of the integrative approach to English language arts and to such models of this approach as that of the California curriculum reform and of the Organic Field Model of the Teaching of English. Instructional representations of subject matter knowledge represented by these models convey to the learner a holistic view of English and of English language arts in use. Such perspectives advance meaningful learning by students, a sense of efficacy by teachers, and greater equity of outcomes for students who come into the classroom with different characteristics. Thus the integrated English approach reaches out to all students. (Excerpts from an instructional unit, "Beyond Imagination," are attached.) (KEH)

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REACHING OUT TO ALL STUDENTS: THE INTEGRATED ENGLISH APPROACH

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Paper Presented at the 1989 NCTE Spring Convention
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McNeil (1981) reminds us that the first basis for organizing instruction was that of separate subjects. Subjects were viewed as disciplines, that is as organized bodies of knowledge and thus it was logical that each subject be taught separately. One gained knowledge from the expert who had spent a number of years studying a given area of knowledge and from whom that knowledge could be passed on to the student. This concept extended into a given discipline in which one could specialize in a given area of the discipline. Even within a given area of the discipline one could further break down the area and become a specialist within a special area of a specialty within a discipline. For example, in the area of literature, one might become knowledgeable about drama but become a specialist in Greek drama or in Shakespearean drama.

Traditionally, the teaching of English language arts in the school classroom has followed the separation of subject matter model. This is not surprising since, as Grossman (1988) points out, preservice teachers learn much about teaching their subjects from their experiences as undergraduates and thus they tend to model the teaching practices of their liberal arts professors. Preservice teachers take courses in Shakespeare, in modern poetry, or in creative writing. Such course experiences coupled with professorial modeling leads many teachers to hold the view that learning involves students receiving information which they then accrue without modification. Anderson (1989) calls this conception of learning

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the receptive-accrual view. Certain aspects of behavioral theory, of course, support this view. However, Grossman, Wilson, and Shulman (1989) remind us that the content of courses at the college level has very little overlap with courses in elementary and secondary schools. College students normally do not take courses in vocabulary or in reading or in grammar which is much of what English teachers are expected to teach in school settings.

Anderson points out that when teachers hold a receptive-accrual view of learning, such learning as well as success in school become dependent on ability or intelligence and on effort. If a student fails, the teacher attributes this to the student's inherent inadequacies. The perpetuation of school failure by low-achieving students frequently follows from such a view. Anderson argues that teachers should adopt a cognitive-mediational conception of learners and learning. The following is a summary of her rationale for the cognitive-mediational perspective.

Anderson argues that the use of cognitive-mediational theory in the classroom will allow student learning to be enhanced and equally important are the implications for the teacher's sense of efficacy and the equity of student opportunities to learn. When teacher's have a sense of efficacy, emphasis is given to the teacher's ability and responsibility to influence students' cognitive processes rather than emphasis on ability and effort and on both as originating within the learner. Equity is promoted by allowing all students opportunities for acquiring knowledge and self-regulation. Anderson defines equity as the reduction of the influence of students' entering characteristics as predictors of eventual school achievement. This is accomplished by the teacher's understanding the student's entering cognitive characteristics and how these characteristics might affect the student's cognitive processing. Teacher interventions are necessary when the student's cognitive

characteristics do not lead to spontaneous active processing of the content in order to gain meaning.

Knowledge and the capacity for self-regulation are two essential types of cognitive characteristics in the cognitive-mediational theory. Knowledge structures of experts and novices and schema theory help us to understand what and how the learner knows. Glaser (1984) points out that novices organize their knowledge around the literal objects explicitly given in a problem statement while experts' knowledge is organized around principles and abstractions that subsume these objects. Schemata are organizational structures linking a number of cases on the basis of their similarity and difference. From this perspective, the teacher becomes concerned with the student's cognitive processing rather than what may be perceived as the student's innate ability. Motivation would become an important element for self-regulated learning. The teacher would consider the characteristics of the tasks required of the students and would make decisions that influence the students' perceptions of what constitutes success and how it can be obtained.

Theoretical constructs such as those put forth by Anderson are much in keeping with theoretical constructs such as Rosenblatt's transactional theory (1978) which are gaining more and more acceptance in the teaching of English language arts. While Rosenblatt described the reader's transaction with literary works as the basis for her theory, others are applying the theory to student writing, such as Robert Probst's (1989) recent chapter entitled Transactional Theory and Response to Student Writing in the recent NCTE publication Writing and Response.

The cognitive-mediational perspective and associated theories such as the transactional theory are essential for teachers in the transformation of their disciplinary knowledge into

forms of knowledge appropriate for students. McDiarmid, Ball, and Anderson (1989) argue that teachers are constantly engaged in a process of constructing and using instructional representations of subject matter knowledge whether or not they are aware of it. By instructional representations, these writers mean a wide range of models that convey something about the subject matter to the learner. They further argue that through the representations teachers select and the ways in which they use them, teachers convey messages to their pupils about both the substance and nature of the subjects they teach.

Ways in which models of teaching convey something about the subject matter to the learner is evident in such studies as George Hillocks' (1984) study of what works in teaching composition which was a meta-analysis of experimental treatment studies. In looking at mode of instruction categories, his research revealed that the environmental mode which engages students with each other in specifiable processes facilitating high levels of peer interaction was among those areas significantly more effective than more traditional patterns of instruction, such as lecture and grammar study. Because approaches to instruction are the basis for what happens in the classroom, much more attention is being given to what we are doing when we "do" English language arts. Indeed, the Coalition of English Associations' statement on the English major emphasizes this point when it asserts "The restructured English major we propose, with its emphasis on how to do English rather than what English is, will better address the needs of preservice and inservice teachers...."

Traditional teaching of English language arts in the school classroom has conveyed to the learner the view that the subject matter is fragmented and teachers prepare discrete, disconnected lessons. Some of these lessons have to do with literature, some have to do with language, and some have to do with composition. In addition, this model of English

language arts produces what Anderson has called the receptive-accrual view of learning and the learner is placed in a passive rather than an active role in the teaching-learning process. Fortunately, English language arts teachers are beginning to move from this model, some by choice and some by mandate. For example, Taylor (1988) reports that an important emphasis of the reform in California's literature-based curriculum is the integrated lesson. She writes:

> ...To focus on the connections between one's use of language and one's status in society, students bring in short transcriptions of exact conversations they overhear--in a restaurant, office, gymnasium, or locker room, or on a street corner or a dance floor. They talk about diction, pronunciation, usage, and metaphor heard. After these discussions, they read Shaw's Pygmalion, dramatizing it as much as possible and attuning their ears to accents. They might also view the film, My Fair Lady. In discussion, they consider the reality and fairness of being judged by one's speech patterns, identifying places around them where they see such judgments being made. They might role- play being interviewed for a job or appearing in court, using various levels of language according to the social roles assigned. As they write about what they learned and analyze their opinions and conclusions about the issues they have discussed, they draw on all of these resources for support: their transcriptions, the play and film, their discussions, and related readings. In preparing their papers, they share ideas by reading essays aloud in small groups, refining, revising, and editing as a result of group work.

Roehler (1983) defines integration as a strategy for intentionally combining subject matter so that students are aware of this integration during implementation. Peters, Grindstaff, Hanzelka, and Olson (1987) in their Organic Field Model of the Teaching of English suggest that each unit of instruction should include three substantive areas of literature, language, and rhetoric; four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking; and three process areas of thinking, valuing, and creating. Taylor's description of the integrated lesson from the California curriculum is in keeping with the concepts of the Organic Model. The handout entitled Excerpts From an Instructional Unit: Beyond Imagination is illustrative of the processes involved in the implementation of the Organic

Model.

Anderson's cognitive-mediational conception of learning and learners is supportive of the integrative approach to English language arts and to such models of this approach as that of the California curriculum reform and of the Organic Field Model of the Teaching of English. Instructional representations of subject matter knowledge represented by these models convey to the learner a holistic view of English and of English language arts in use. Such perspectives advance meaningful learning by students, a sense of efficacy by teachers, and greater equity of outcomes for students who come into the classroom with different characteristics. Thus the integrated English approach reaches out to all students.

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EXCERPTS
FROM
INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT

BEYOND IMAGINATION

GENERAL OVE1VIEW

Grade level: 10th
Type of class: average students

This unit is the second thematic unit in a series of six two-week units. The semester primarily deals with an introduction to and an appreciation for literature. The previous unit dealt with adventure with an emphasis mainly on plot elements. This one looks more closely at the characters and their personalities. Students will be lead to identify with the characters after a period of time. The unit which follows begins to deal with the conflicts that many literary characters face, and emphasis will be on the solutions that the characters chose in relation to what the students would have done. "Beyond Imagination" attempts to involve students in a search for their own imaginations as students deal with situations in everyday life, in their own private time, and finally in their writing processes.

Although the primary focus of the semester is on literature, a great deal of writing will accompany the reading. Students will examine the characters and themselves by using the methods of process writing. Language skills will be integrated within the unit as related to the stories read and the class discussions.

Finally, the concept of IMAGINATION will be discussed, and it should be resolved that a combination of reality and a healthy imagination facilitates the creative process.

The primary goal of this unit is to demonstrate to students the relevance of literature to their everyday lives. Valuing is the major concept on which this unit is based. Students will be led to identify with several characters in short stories and poems, and will examine their own personalities and beliefs as they relate to the characters.

A large amount of group activity is present in this unit and the others which follow. The teacher believes that group work promotes communicative skills as well as opens up the students for large group discussion. To avoid cliques, students are required to draw numbers, or "number off" for some projects. The students are allowed, however, to choose their own groups for the videotape activity.

CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES

COMMUNITY:

This school district is located in a city of about 100,000 citizens. The particular school is located in a middle to affluent area of town. The parents are basically well-educated and are interested in their children's education. Often, parent interaction elevates into problems for administrators and teachers, because teaching techniques are questioned.

A large air force base is located in this town, therefore there are several different dialects apparent in the school. Basically, students are interested in learning because of the support of their parents. Many of the students are college bound.

POLICY:

Fortunately, the school board is very receptive to teacher and administrative input. They share the concerns of many parents and community members on issues dealing with education. The school board tends to over-emphasize the results of standardized testing, however.

Legally, teachers are forbidden to administer corporal punishment. Also, a state-approved list of essential elements must be followed closely by the teachers. Teacher accountability is stressed heavily, and several evaluations are carried out for each teacher per year.

The issue of funding is not a big problem in this community. Each teacher receives a budget for supplies needed. Teacher salaries are average and benefits are very good. The school is somewhat modern. Resources such as audio/visual equipment, copy machines, and computers are readily available for the teacher's use. The classroom is flexible and large enough for the teacher to facilitate his or her preferences.

PROFESSION:

This teacher is beginning her first year of teaching and is extremely optimistic, as well as a bit apprehensive. She places a great deal of emphasis on writing skills, since students seem to be lacking most in that area. She is struggling to integrate writing into all subject areas. The teachers are very supportive of one another. The major negative aspect of the English department is that the grading restrictions are rigorous, leaving little room for teacher subjectivity. The majority of the English department members belong to at least one professional organization, and at least half are participating in higher education experiences outside of school.

CONTENT VARIABLES

SUBSTANCE:

Included in this unit is an activity using Lewis Carroll"s "Jabberwocky," which will be used to observe language more closely. Also, each of the three major works studied will have unfamiliar vocabulary which the students must become acquainted with. Three short stories and two poems will fulfill the literature element. Finally, essay writing will take place throughout the unit in class activities and journal writing, and will be used to measure student understanding at the completion of this thematic unit.

SKILLS:

The content of this unit and the others in this series has an integration of all of the skills required in learning. Students will read short stories and poetry, as well as handouts and instructions for assignments. They will continue journal writing and will write essays on the literature read. Classroom discussions, as well as group activities and oral assignments will facilitate listening and speaking skills.

PROCESS.

Cognitive thinking will be required for students to understand the basic elements of the stories and also to learn new vocabulary words. Affective thinking is stressed more heavily, however. Students must examine their own imaginations and decide why imagination is important in writing and in life. Finally, students will be required to write a comic strip and also to produce an original skit using their own imagination, which integrates the creative domain.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

(b) English II

(1) Writing concepts and skills.

(A) use the composing process to plan and generate writing;
(F) write literary discourse of a variety of types including character sketches, stories;

(2) Language concepts and skills.

(A) produce well-formed simple, compound, and complex sentences;
(B) choose appropriate words to convey intended meaning;
(C) use all parts of speech effectively in sentences;
(D) use oral language effectively in a variety of situations;

(3) Literature concepts and skills.

(A) recognize the major differences among poems, short stories, novels, plays, and nonfiction;
(C) recognize point of view in literary selections;
(D) identify use of basic symbols in literary selections;
(E) recognize the development of an overall theme in a literary work; and
(F) use basic literary terminology.

(4) Reading concepts and skills.

(A) expand vocabulary;
(B) select main idea of a selection;
(C) recognize relevant details;
(F) make inferences and draw conclusions;
(G) evaluate and make judgments.

OUTLINE OF STEPS
FOR UNIT II

"BEYOND IMAGINATION"

STEP 1:	Diagnostic Activities
STEP 2:	Oral Reading and Class Discussion
STEP 3:	Individual Aural Activity and Class Discussion
STEP 4:	Role Playing, Individual Writing, and Class Discussion
STEP 5:	Class Discussion and Group Comic Project
STEP 6:	Oral and Silent Reading, Class Discussion
STEP 7:	Concluding Discussion and Videotaping Instructions
STEP 8:	Group Planning and Resource Hunting
STEP 9:	Videotaping
STEP 10:	Unit Evaluation
STEP 11:	Discuss Exam and Watch Videotape

STEP 4: ROLE PLAYING AND INDIVIDUAL WRITING

Rationale: By writing about an imaginary experience, students are participating in an activity done by the main character in "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." This gives the students a greater insight into what the character was actually doing and why. This activity further promotes the premise that Literature is relevant.

Materials: Picture of an astronaut.
Transparency with writing instructions on it Textbook

Teacher Activities:

1. Teacher will present a picture of an astronaut and instruct students to write a paragraph in which they pretend to be that person in the picture.

2. Teacher will lead a discussion about the reading assignment which deals with questions related to daydreaming, the value of the imagination, and the importance of sometimes separating the two worlds of reality and imagination.

3. Give homework assignment.

Student Activities:

1. Students are to observe the picture and write a paragraph which answers the following questions: Where am I?, Who am I?, How did I get here?, Why am I here?, and any other pertinent information. (p.o. #6)

2. Students are to share the information in their essays for the class discussion and come to realize that we all have fantasies like Walter Mitty.

3. Students are to participate in a class discussion of "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty."

4. For homework, students are to cut out a comic strip and bring it to class for discussion the next day. (p.o. #7)